624 They have almost the same ceremony when they make a captain of a man, although captains do not have too much authority among them. They make him fast, gash him, and then throw at his head the skins of cuttlefish. If he does not parry them dextrously he is in danger of being wounded, in which case he would not be considered a good captain.

643 During the pregnancy of the wife the husband does not eat tortoise
262 for if he did eat it, they say, they child would be deaf as a tortoise. In the same way the father doesn't eat manatee because that animal has very small eyes and the child would not fail to inherit this imperfection. But when they eat with the French they are not so scrupulous about these restrictions.

4. Commerce

157 The life which they lead is so agreeable that they are very con-
648 tented, and no matter how well we treat them, we cannot keep them living among us. Some Caribs have lived among the French for a long time and have had an easy life, but at the first occasion they have broken away and returned to the other Caribs. They are extremely suspicious, and if they see you with a musket in your hand they will never visit your house. The least thing makes them mistrustful. As we were passing on our return by way of Dominica a Carib came towards us half way from the shore. As soon as he saw the small boat which was behind our vessel he turned quickly away. If one has weapons in his boat they will never come aboard. If one of them climbs aboard a ship, the other always stays in the canoe as a lookout. They judge others as they judge themselves, which means they trust no one. If they come in sight of a house they carefully look all around, partly to see if there is anything to frighten them, and partly to discover a means of surprising it.

648 When they entered the brick house which the governor had made they roughly threw themselves against the wall to test the possibility of pushing it over. They found it firm, and hiding their astonishment and anger they remarked, as though it pleased them, "That's pretty good, compere." No matter how good they have been with you they will endeavor to trap you, and once they have you at their advantage

846 stomach of the child and that it would inherit the natural weaknesses of the animals which the father had eaten. For example, if the father ate tortoise the child would be deaf and would have no more brains than this animal and if he ate manatee the child's eyes would resemble those of this animal i.e., small and round. There are many similar examples of the same thing.

Finally, during all of this time they have absolutely no intercourse with their wives. Brutality, weakness, and unbridled lust, typical of the greater part of our Christians, is sufficiently restrained by these barbarians who have neither faith nor religion. In addition, as soon
● [843] as their wives conceive they have no further intercourse.

304 The women also fast during the time after the birth of their child, but not so rigorously as their husbands. They prepare themselves by this means and take great care to flatten the foreheads of their babies while the bone is still pliable. They push in the nose to make it flat. However, many of them may be found who have aquiline noses which look just like the noses of the French.

852 Eight days after the six month period the father invites one of his
553 most intimate friends to be the godfather of his son, or if the child is a girl, the friend is called a godmother. They have a small banquet and then cut a little hair from the head of the child. They pierce the ear lobe and also the septum of the nose and they pass two or three threads of cotton through the hole to make certain that the wound will not mend itself. Next they pierce the lower lip. If they think that the child is too weak to stand this pain they postpone the piercing and content themselves with cutting its hair. This being done they give the child the name which will be his for life [but] which does not prevent the taking of other names. But that name will be with him always and in recognition of the fact the father and mother of the child anoint the neck and head of the godfather or godmother with oil of palmetto.

854 It is astonishing to see how few Carib children are deformed con-
[752] sidering the fact that their mothers never swaddle them; in this respect the Carib women would be able to mock at our French women who pamper their children. When the children have gained strength
[853] through their mother's milk they are then given some sweet potatoes or bananas which are first chewed by the mothers and then put into the mouths of their babies.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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It is not usual for husband and wife to spend the whole night together—each retires to sleep on a separate couch or mat. 513

Rochefort mentions the fact that the Island Carib of his day never touched a pregnant woman. This is still true, be the woman his own wife or another. 843

I have heard a married woman protest that she was not normally pregnant, but that a piai had put a tête-chien (dog-headed Dominica constrictor) in her belly. On the other hand, legend reports this snake as having had connections with women in the old days.

Parturition is accomplished in a squatting or sitting posture (in the old days by straddling a hammock split lengthwise down the middle), and with the assistance of some old sage-femme, whose manipulations and remedies are of very doubtful benefit to the patient. After giving birth, the Carib woman remains confined to the house for 40 days; i. e., until her "retour de couches." 844

Suckling by the mother is general, and often of long duration. I came across a little boy of about 4 years, who, after helping his elder sister to carry up water from the river, used to claim and obtain refreshment from his mother's "tote-totes" (breasts; children's speech, possibly from Carib "totaka," to support). In the all-too-frequent event of a woman dying in childbirth, the maternal aunt or even the grandmother will suckle the infant. I was told that any woman who once has borne, irrespective of age, may induce lactation by the use of certain herbs, some applied locally, others taken internally. I was unable to learn their names, with two exceptions: the ripe fruit of the corossol (*Anona muricata*) and a berry they call kurupùm (*Renealmia exaltata* (?)). Whatever the cause, I myself witnessed the case of a woman whose youngest child was a grown man, giving the breast with apparent success to her niece's newborn baby. 853 [278]

Clever as the Carib woman would seem to be in inducing the rise of her milk, so her attempts to get rid of it appear clumsy to us. When the time for weaning has come, her usual procedure is to milk herself onto a fire stone, or, better still, into the nest hole of a species of large black ant, known locally as fourmis mordantes.

The naming of infants has, nowadays, become confused with Christian baptism, though the baptismal name itself is rarely, if ever, used in after life, its place being taken by another, chosen concurrently. Despite the priest's protests, baptism is delayed until at least one month after birth—that is, until the septa of the cranium have joined. The choice of names falls to the godparents—to the godfather in the case of a boy; to the godmother in the case of a girl. Carib names, such as Wàkanik, Màruka, Cimanàri, are known to have been used as recently as 20 years ago, but no living example remains. The nonbaptismal name now takes their place. Most families bear surnames, or, as they call them, "titles"—relics, in all 553

8: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1950
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These retreats and fasts culminated in a blood-letting ritual which was particularly severe in the case of an adult who had become a father for the first time, or in that of one who had "killed some Arawak." A chicken-hawk was sacrificed by crushing its head against that of the man, who then stood upon a pile of cassava-cakes whose centres only he had eaten during his fast, while his back was scarified with an aguti-tooth lancet until the blood ran down, and then rubbed with a decoction containing tobacco-juice, rocou-leaves (*Bixa orellana*), and the seeds of red-peppers (*Capsicum*) crushed together with the body of the sacrificed bird. Subsequently, he was given the latter's dried heart to eat, and finally had to take a drastic emetic (usually tobacco-juice) which made him "rendre tripes et boudins." After having undergone this ordeal, he had to fast for some days longer—although he might be "fed like a child" with some of his blood-soaked cassavas—while the others got drunk at his expense. Adolescents were treated somewhat more gently; but they too brought their sacrificial bird, and had their backs scarified; after which they had to remain fasting for some further time in their hammocks, and without changing the posture in which their sponsors had placed them, under pain of becoming deformed.[8]

Before attempting to interpret the somewhat complex syndrome of contagious magic implied by the foregoing review of seventeenth-century practices, it will be as well to set forth, in brief, the current forms of dietary and occupational restrictions found among the Dominica remnant of the Island Carib tribes and their more vigorous Central American offshoot, and the occasions for their application.

Blood-letting rituals such as that described above no longer exist, even in legend, among either of these groups.[9] Nor are adolescents or neophytes subjected by them to any special regimen. On the other hand, dietary or occupational restrictions—or both—are required of the new parent of either sex, of the bereaved spouse (particularly in the case of a wife who loses her husband), and of menstruating women. It is perhaps worth noting that, nowadays, those placed on men concern *only* activities, whereas those placed on women concern *mainly* diet.

From the Black Carib of British Honduras, it was learned that:

> Once a woman knows herself to be pregnant . . . both she and her mate must refrain from killing or eating the flesh of certain animals. An informant recounted how his uncle once had killed a snake in his garden, while a woman—not even a "partner"—was pregnant for him; and how, as a result, the child had been still-born, with flat head and nose and small eyes like those of a snake. In another case, it was said that a

[8] Mainly from Breton, 1892, pp. 202-203.

[9] As a personal practice, however, many hunters, in order to have luck in the chase, draw blood from their arms by making a series of close, superficial cuts with a razor-blade.

8: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1950
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child had been born with a tail because the father had killed a monkey; and in yet another, that a child always howled in bad weather because its mother had eaten "baboon" (Howling-monkey, Carib: *arauada*) while pregnant.[10]

Similar beliefs are also current among the present-day Carib Indians in Dominica. Following her delivery, the mother must abstain from stimulants, acidulous fruits and juices, and from all "heating" foods and condiments for forty days. The list of forbidden items may vary in detail from family to family, but in all cases it would almost certainly include: coffee, all citrus, pork, game, turtle, crabs, and the dearly loved red-pepper (*Caspicum*). Nor must she take throughout this period, any water or other beverage that has not been previously warmed. On the third day, she is given a purgative infusion; and only after this has taken effect is the baby put to suckle her. Numerous and various herbs and leaves are collected by the wise-woman (who is often the parturient's mother), and put to steep in hot water. On the ninth day, a large pot of this concoction is drawn off and, after mother and child have been ritually bathed in the remainder, given to the former to drink. Her period of seclusion ended, the mother goes to bathe in the sea. The ritual nature of these baths appears from the fact that, for ordinary hygienic purposes, mother and child are bathed upon delivery, and daily thereafter; and while women, like men, normally bathe daily in the river for cleanliness, and but occasionally in the sea for fun, a pregnant woman is debarred from the latter diversion on the grounds that this would make the sea "rise" (in storm).[11]

The precautions observed by the new father are less exacting today, but quite as important. Throughout the forty-day period of his wife's seclusion, he must abstain from all sexual intercourse, be it with his wife or another; for any laxity in this regard might bring about his child's death. Nor must he, for an indeterminate though usually shorter period, undertake any activity demanding strenuous physical exertion or the use of sharp instruments or dangerous weapons. Negligence in this respect on his part is said to bring on colic, diarrhoea, and vomiting in the child; or to cause its navel to bleed and fail to heal properly. As a precaution, the father may tie a homespun thread of wild-pineapple fibre around his loins, and another round those of the infant; but should a mishap of this nature actually occur, he would rub the child's body with his own axillary sweat, or give a piece of his sweat-soaked shirt to be boiled in water, which would then be administered to the ailing infant as a medicine.

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[10] Author's unpublished ms.

[11] These data were obtained primarily by personal observation among the Dominica Carib; but tally for the most part with the accounts given by Black Carib informants in British Honduras. Material for the remaining descriptive paragraphs was obtained partly by direct observation and partly through informants in both places.

12: Taylor E-5 (ca. 1930-1937)1949
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302 urukámbui, "closes the pores, prevents the seawater from drying on their skins, keeps off mosquitoes, and kills chigoes."[33]

114 285 [824] Carib basketry was and still is made from *Ischnosiphon arouma* (Aublet) Koernicke, the "ouallómian" of Breton's or the uarúmã of our own time and spelling, and not, as Rouse says, from "Latania" (presumably an anglicization of French latanier, from Carib alátani, which is the small fan-palm, *Coccothrinax martinicensis* Beccari), whose leaves served as thatching and for making rough sunshades, umbrellas, bags, etc., but could not possibly be employed in the typical wicker pattern and twilled basketry of the Carib. As in Breton's time, so today Carib baskets have a double wall and cover like those of the Taino described by Rouse,[34] but such baskets are and may be rendered waterproof only by the insertion of one or more intermediary layers of leaves. The *Mytilus edulis* is not found [825] in the Lesser Antilles today, and it seems probable that the "mussel" whose shells were used, according to Rouse,[35] in scraping strands employed for basketry, refers to some other species.

114 611 Although it may not be possible, as Rouse says, to substantiate Gower's statement that descent was matrilineal among the Island Carib, this feature is at least implicit in the kinship terminology.

114 595 Breton is in disagreement with Rouse's authorities on several points concerning the life cycle. Of a husband's relations with his wives, he says:

> they [the wives] have their turn month and month about, even when they are pregnant; after childbirth they [the husbands] remain without seeing them for a good while, for fear of harming the child.[36]

● [843] In seeming contradiction, Rouse says that sexual intercourse was forbidden during pregnancy, and does not mention post-puerperal abstinence.[37] The solution may perhaps be found in the attitude of the modern Carib father, who says that while abstinence during pregnancy is a matter of taste, intercourse during the forty-day 114 period following birth would be injurious to the child. Rouse notes that the 946 accounts of the couvade vary considerably, his own being "taken largely from Davies, with supplemental data from La Borde:" "For several days after birth the mother fasted, eating only dried cassava and drinking warm water. The father, on the other hand, practiced the couvade. Immediately after the birth he com-

33 Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
34 *Handbook*, p. 527.
35 *Handbook*, p. 554.
36 Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 278.
37 *Handbook*, p. 557.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

X 824 A shrub native to the tropics of America but naturalized in the Old World, and found in Dominica on hillsides and waste ground at lower elevations.

[278] According to MACFADYEN quoted in (18) the juice of the leaves and buds of this plant are employed in the form of an infusion or bath for the cure of ringworm and other skin diseases. The pulped leaves and flowers are also used in Jamaica as poultices for the treatment of sores.

The Caribs bathe themselves with the juice of crushed desay leaves to help eradicate skin diseases.

Specimen citation: 3400.

Cassia bicapsularis Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 376. 1753.

Adipera bicapsularis Britton & Rose in Br. & Wils. Bot. Porto Rico (Sci. Surv. Porto Rico & Virg. Isls. 5). 370. 1924.

Sou Marqué.

A shrub of the West Indies and continental tropical America.

[755 751] The Caribs sometimes cultivate sou marqué. It is one of the constituents (with *Mimosa pudica* and *Petiveria alliacea*) of a ritual bath taken at the time of a new moon. This bath is considered to be a protection against evil spells. For other uses of sou marqué see *Ipomoea pes-caprae* and *Ocimum micranthum*.

Specimen citation: 143 (T).

Cassia hirsuta Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 378. 1753.

Ditremexa hirsuta Britton & Rose in Br. & Wils. Bot. Porto Rico (Sci. Surv. Porto Rico & Virg. Isls. 5). 372. 1924.

Z'Herbes Puantes (« Male »). — *kulábule, nhákere háho* (w) (« ants' hammock »).

A widespread herbaceous plant of tropical America.

Both this species and the next are called by the Carib z'herbes puantes; however, a distinction is made in that *C. hirsuta* is considered to be the « male » plant and *C. occidentalis* the « female ». *C. hirsuta* is considered to be the better or « stronger » of the two.

[272 278 843] An infusion of the ground seeds of either z'herbes puantes is employed as a febrifuge and as a coffee substitute. The latter is preferred (to coffee) by pregnant women.

Specimen citation: 122 (T).

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

824 K

Cassia occidentalis Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 377. 1753.

Ditremexa occidentalis Britton & Rose in Br. & Wils. Bot. Porto Rico (Sci. Surv. Porto Rico & Virg. Isls. 5) 377. (1924). Coffee Senna, Jumbie Coffee, Wild Coffee, Negro Coffee, Stinking Weed. — Z'Herbes Puantes (« Female »). — *kuldbule.*

This species was first collected in Jamaica but it is widely distributed in the tropics and subtropics and in the warm temperate portions of the United States.

The seeds of *Cassia occidentalis* have been used as a coffee substitute in many regions, and the plant itself is employed in domestic medicine. An infusion of the leaves has been employed in West Africa in the treatment of yellow fever while an ointment derived from the plant has also been used for cutaneous diseases.

Seeds of the « female » z'herbes puantes are utilized by the Island Carib as a coffee substitute (quite unnecessary in a country where coffee is grown). A tea made from the leaves is considered a « cure-all » for colds, fever, for washing cuts, and for pregnant women. « Teas » are also made from the roots and flowers, the former being used for colds, the latter for « cough ».

[272] [278 843]

Specimen citation: 123 (T), 3187.

Desmodium axillare (Swartz) DeCandolle Prod. 2: 333. 1825. var. axillare.

Meibomia axillaris O. Kuntze, Rev. Gen. 1: 195. 1891.

Tick Trefoil. — Cacoyer.

A creeping herbaceous species of tropical America.

Caribs chop up a whole plant of cacoyer, place it in water and then drink the decoction as a « cure » for gonorrhea.

[278]

Specimen citation: 3384.

Erythrina corallodendron Linnaeus var. **bicolor** Krukoff, Brittonia 3: 275. 1939.

Coral Tree. — Bois Immortel, Immortel.

This variety of *E. corallodendron* is limited to the Lesser Antilles. In Dominica it is to be found at lower and middle elevations.

The Creoles often use the trees as living and permanent (« immortal ») boundary or fence posts.

[417]